

- (b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and
- (c) the reaction of the Government there to?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) According to Pentagon sources which is reported in the newspaper, the test involved disabling an old satellite which had been launched in may 1996 (now not in service) by aiming a high-power laser beam at it. The laser beam is transmitted from a remote army base in New Mexico.

The objective of the test, according to Pentagon, is not to destroy the satellite or result in any orbital debris, nor to pose any risk to other satellites but only to collect data to study how to protect US satellites against lasers.

(c) The test proposed cannot be considered as a violation of any international treaty to which India is a party. However, development in this area are monitored by the Government.

Clearance to Power Project

48. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of power plants received from Rajasthan are pending for clearance of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA);

(b) the estimated cost and capacity of each project; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to provide clearance to those projects at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI JOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) The Detailed Project Report (DPR) submitted by M/s Hindustan Vidyut Corporation Limited to Central Electricity Authority (CEA) for implementing the Barsingsar Lignite Mining-cum-Power Generation Project (on the competitive bidding route) in Rajasthan has been considered for techno-economic appraisal by CEA.

(b) The Barsingsar Lignite Mining-cum-Power Generation Project has a proposed capacity of 500 MW and an estimated cost of Rs. 2468.23 crores.

(c) The project will be cleared as soon as the promoters are able to tie up pending inputs and requisite clearances from Central and State Government agencies.

[Translation]

Queen's Visit to India

49. SHRI RAMCHANDRA VEERAPPA :
SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Queen Elizabeth visited India recently; and

(b) if so the details of talks held between her and Indian leaders?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b) Queen Elizabeth II paid a State Visit to India from October 12-18, 1997. This was goodwill visit and the talks covered in a general manner, bilateral relations with the U.K., as well as other subjects of mutual concern.

[English]

Non-Aligned Movement

50. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken fresh initiatives for identifying the specific areas for revitalising the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM);

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith response of the other member countries of NAM to the initiatives taken by India; and

(c) the details of action plan finalised/proposed for 1997-98 for vitalisation of NAM?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) to (c) India has been actively constructively participating in different NAM forums with a view to strengthen and revitalise the Movement. India has taken a number of initiatives to identify specific areas for action in this regard. India hosted the 12th NAM Ministerial Conference in April, 1997 in New Delhi. At this conference, Ministers of Non-Aligned countries concluded that the Movement should enhance its unity and cohesion and co-ordinate positions of member countries towards major international issues with the a view to strengthening their negotiating power. They reiterated that it was essential to widen the scope of agreement, expand the area of action, set clearer criteria and procedures, and develop the principles of solidarity among the members of the Movement. The Ministers directed the Movement to promote jointly its collective positions on international peace and security, UN reforms,